

Message Text

SECRET

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EXDIS

FOR NEA ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON ONLY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR MILI MO US
SUBJECT: TIMING OF DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED CLOSURE OF KENITRA
COMPLEX WITH KING HASSAN

REF: STATE 190371

1. REFTEL OUTLINED THE PROPOSED TIMETABLE FOR ACHIEVING A COORDINATED USG POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT AND FOR DISCUSSING IT WITH KING HASSAN. ON THE LATTER POINT, IT WAS EXPECTED THAT I WOULD RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE EARLY FALL. THIS TIMETABLE HAS NOW SLIPPED TO THE POINT OF MAKING ANY APPROACH BY ME TO THE KING BETWEEN NOW AND JANUARY 20 COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. HASSAN WOULD CLEARLY WONDER AT THE TIMING: IF OUR APPROACH REPRESENTED AN EFFORT BY THE OUTGOING ADMINISTRATION ALONE, WHY NOW AT THE LAST MINUTE? IF IT HAD BEEN CLEARED BY THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, THEN DOES IT AUGUR A CHANGE IN BASIC POLICY TOWARD MOROCCO? IN EITHER CASE, I BELIEVE HE WOULD LINK FURTHER DISCUSSIONS TO HIS INTEREST IN VISITING THE U.S. IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS (RABAT 6655).

2. QUITE ASIDE FROM THE OVERALL MERITS OF RENEWING THE INVITATION TO HASSAN, I SHOULD NOTE THAT HIS PRESENCE IN
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WASHINGTON WOULD ENHANCE OUR CHANCES OF GETTING MORE OF OUR DESIDERATA BY (A) CONTINUING THE FRAMEWORK OF FACE-TO-FACE PRESIDENT TO KING CONTACT USED OVER THE YEARS ON THIS SUBJECT; AND, (B) MINIMIZING THE CHANCES FOR ANY MISCONCEPTIONS ON HASSAN'S PART AS TO OUR INTENTION OF CONTINUING TO DEVELOP CLOSE, POSITIVE

RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO.

3. THE SOLE ARGUMENTS FOR EARLY ACTION HAVE BEEN BUDGETARY (USAF FOR ITS GEODSS AND NAVY TO PERMIT AGREED-ON LEAD TIMES FOR THE TERMINATION OF MOROCCAN EMPLOYEES). I WOULD HOPE THAT SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCING COULD DELAY THESE CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE NECESSARY FEW MONTHS. AT AN ANNUAL COST OF \$7 MILLION TO OPERATE THE ENTIRE KENITRA COMPLEX, WE WOULD BE TALKING ABOUT DOD COMING UP WITH A MAXIMUM OF \$1,750,000 FOR A THREE-MONTH DELAY TO \$2,300,000 FOR A FOUR-MONTH DELAY. IN FACT, I AM TOLD IT MAY NOT EVEN BE THIS MUCH AS THE GREATEST EXPENDITURE IS AT KENITRA (RATHER THAN BOUKNADEL AND SIDI YAHIA) AND THE NAVY PLAN CALLS FOR CONTINUING OPERATIONS THERE VIRTUALLY UNTIL ITS FINAL CLOSURE IN OCTOBER, 1978.

4. I, THEREFORE, RECOMMEND THAT ANY APPROACH TO THE KING BE POSTPONED INTO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, PREFERABLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH A VISIT BY HASSAN.
ANDERSON

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